

Afghanistan: German Vote Should Prompt a New NATO Strategy

Julianne Smith

Germany's grand coalition government has defied public opinion in pushing votes through parliament to extend the country's military deployments in Afghanistan, which include 3,000 troops, six Tornado reconnaissance aircraft and associated support personnel, and 100 soldiers engaged in special operations. But the coalition's huge parliamentary majority will not extinguish mounting public opposition to Germany's biggest single military intervention since World War II, even if it is largely peaceful. In a mid-October opinion poll, 61 percent said they wanted to end the mission and only 29 percent supported it.

The debate raging in Berlin echoes similar arguments in other NATO countries and at alliance headquarters, and it serves as a microcosm of the three major challenges facing NATO in Afghanistan, where the alliance's future ability to project force around the globe is at stake.

First, like the alliance, Germany is divided on how to find the right balance between security and development. Following the initial military victory over the Taliban in 2001, several NATO members, including Germany, sent troops to help with reconstruction. But with the Taliban's resurgence in recent years, fueled partly by record opium poppy production and instability on the Pakistani border, there is now a clear need for both high-intensity combat and "softer" reconstruction tasks in regions that have begun to stabilize.

The question facing Germany is whether to weight its contribution toward the security or development side of the scales. Should Berlin accede to requests from the United States and other allies and move some troops from the relatively stable north to the more dangerous south to assist with heavy fighting? Or will Germany contribute more to Afghanistan's future (and to a German exit strategy) by providing nonmilitary incentives for Afghans to reject the Taliban? So far, Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Social Democratic coalition partners have opted for the latter, arguing, at least publicly, that German troops will make a greater and more lasting contribution by staying in the north. She has also promised to increase development aid to Afghanistan.

The real reason for Merkel's decision is quite clearly diminishing public support for the Afghan missions, a development that highlights NATO's second challenge—how to overcome a serious failure of communication. Many NATO members never adequately explained to their publics why they were sending troops to Afghanistan in the first place. Some, including Germany, have chosen to justify their participation on humanitarian grounds. Others have tried to avoid public debate altogether.

(continued on page 2)

GERMANY: Special Issue



A German reconnaissance Tornado

Franco-German Relations: Squabbles but Not Yet a Divorce

Reginald Dale

Six months since Nicolas Sarkozy was elected president of France, the Franco-German partnership is in bad repair. Berlin and Paris have clashed on issues ranging from the euro to sanctions against Iran, and some commentators even speak of a "divorce" between the two countries whose celebrated partnership has long been the locomotive of European economic and political integration.

In Germany's eyes, and in the view of most analysts, the blame for the tensions can be laid largely at Sarkozy's hyperactive feet. The French leader has disappointed initial German expectations that he would rapidly bring big reforms to the French economy, promote an international free trade agenda, and breathe new life into relations with Berlin after the feckless *fin de regime* of his predecessor Jacques Chirac.

Sarkozy has certainly done plenty to annoy his supposed political ally, Christian Democratic chancellor Angela Merkel. Perhaps his gravest sins in German eyes have been to challenge the independence of the European Central Bank, an unshakable precondition of German acceptance of the euro, and to postpone France's conformity to a euro zone target of 2010 for bringing budgets close to balance, a goal Germany is working hard to achieve.

More generally, however, the pushy and sometimes prickly Sarkozy has given the clear impression that he is challenging Merkel for the leadership of Europe and asserting a neo-Gaullist French nationalism that does not mesh comfortably with Merkel's taste for diplomatic consensus and compromise. The same can be said for Sarkozy's exuberant personal style, which Merkel finds overbearing and often distasteful. Sarkozy and Merkel both get on each other's nerves, according to their officials.

(continued on page 2)

Atlantic Outlook is a newsletter of the CSIS Europe Program, including the New European Democracies Project and the Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership. Edited by Reginald Dale, it provides news, analysis, and commentary on political, economic, and security developments in Europe, the EU and the United States, and in transatlantic relations. It also highlights forthcoming and recent CSIS Europe Program events. Contact Derek Mix: dmix@csis.org.

Afghanistan *(from page 1)*

As the security situation has deteriorated and casualties have risen, however, popular pressure has mounted on governments, especially in Europe and Canada, to bring the troops home. Merkel and others have tried repeatedly to counter such demands by stressing the need to build more schools and create jobs for Afghans. Such arguments garnered enough support in October to extend Germany's commitment to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO force in Afghanistan, for another year. The cabinet agreed to recommit the special forces to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the U.S.-led counterterrorism operation, in early November.

The German stance does little, however, to address NATO's third challenge: burden sharing. British, Canadian, Dutch, and Danish troops have been engaged in fierce and deadly firefights with the Taliban for years and are now desperately seeking reinforcements. The refusal of countries like Germany to help in the south (except for loosely defined "emergencies") causes enormous resentment and raises deeper questions about NATO's future. Although NATO is based on the concept of collective defense—the reality in Afghanistan is different. Allied support comes in varying shapes and sizes, with different restrictions on when and how national forces may be used. In short, burden sharing has become optional.

While German approval of the OEF mission will be an important symbolic gesture, it will do little to ensure operational success or tackle the three major challenges outlined above. That is why NATO must begin a complete overhaul of its strategy once the German votes are over. The alliance should start by merging the OEF and ISAF missions, or at least their police training components, and devise a more effective counternarcotics strategy. (Afghanistan's opium production has grown 34 percent since 2006 and now accounts for 93 percent of world supply.) The allies must also examine how to tackle larger regional problems, especially deepening unrest in Pakistan, which has dramatically destabilized Afghanistan. Other organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, must be persuaded to help more

with "softer" tasks, so that adequate stabilization assistance follows each military victory. Police training, for example, is still woefully underfunded.

Such mid-course corrections might persuade European leaders to start much-needed national conversations about doing more. The dangers of abandoning Afghanistan to internal strife or muddling through with inadequate support are very real. And a defeat for NATO would have disastrous long-term consequences that the allies would quickly come to regret. One result would probably be a U.S. decision to abandon joint NATO operations in projecting force internationally and return to the "coalitions of the willing" that Germany and some other European countries so intensely dislike.

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FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS *(from page 1)*

In the words of the French newspaper *Le Parisien*, "Angela Merkel, who is very reserved, does not greatly value the outpouring of affection from her French opposite number—his way of kissing her on every meeting and touching her and handling her shoulders in front of the cameras." Germans also resent the way they feel Sarkozy unjustifiably grabbed the limelight by claiming responsibility for agreement on the new EU Reform Treaty under the German EU presidency in June and for the release of five Bulgarian nurses held by Libya—in July—after months of painstaking diplomacy by others.

It would be rash, however, to sound the death knell for the Franco-German partnership, which has frequently suffered ups and downs in the past. The two governments are deeply entwined in policymaking and bureaucratic networks that have stood the test of time. And while agreement between France and Germany is no longer sufficient to guarantee progress in a 27-member European Union, it is still a necessary condition.

Past relationships between French and German leaders have started badly before turning friendly, for example between Chirac and Merkel's predecessor, Gerhard Schröder. And those Berlin officials who criticize Sarkozy's performance also say they are still committed to a strong partnership, because the two countries are condemned by history to work together.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it will be hard to mend the relationship—and even if it is repaired it is unlikely to look the same as it did in its heyday under French president François Mitterrand and German chancellor Helmut Kohl. Sarkozy undoubtedly wants to reassert French dominance in Europe, while both Merkel and Sarkozy are also keen to draw closer to British prime minister Gordon Brown. Sarkozy has in the past proposed extending the Franco-German relationship to include the other "big" EU countries—Britain, Italy, Spain, and Poland.

There are still important areas where Merkel and Sarkozy agree. Both are far more pro-American than their predecessors, and both favor offering Turkey a "privileged partnership" rather than EU membership. Berlin has strongly welcomed Sarkozy's suggestion that France might rejoin NATO's integrated military command.

Nevertheless, Sarkozy's insistence that the European Central Bank be brought under greater political control, specifically so as to allow the euro to fall to restore French competitiveness, will continue to be heresy in German eyes. His determination to create "national champions" by fostering mergers between French companies, and protecting them from foreign takeover, is also anathema to Berlin. And he has not yet shown he can deliver French economic reform and budgetary discipline.

Sarkozy continues to irritate Merkel by offering unwanted policy advice, such as urging Germany to embrace nuclear power, and failing to consult on issues such as his call for EU sanctions on Iran and his choice of a Frenchman to head the International Monetary Fund. Looking ahead, there are likely to be further tensions over trade and agriculture if the Doha multilateral trade negotiations ever get back on track.

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RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

September 20—CSIS Statesmen's Forum in Washington with Bernard Kouchner, foreign minister of France, who stressed the importance of cooperation among France, Europe, and the United States in addressing global challenges, including Iran, the Middle East, Kosovo, Darfur, and climate change.

October 8–9—International conference, *Efficient Government in a Functioning State: Key to Economic Development*, aimed at promoting good governance and economic development in Kosovo, as well as regional cooperation, organized by the CSIS New European Democracies Project in Pristina, Kosovo.

November 1—CSIS conference, "*Montenegro, the West Balkans, and Transatlantic Integration*," focused on Montenegro's political, economic, and security development.

November 8—Conference, *Romania in the EU: Impact on Development and Transatlantic Relations*, examined Romania's economic and political development, foreign policy and energy security 10 months after EU entry, organized by CSIS and the Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

November 16—Discussion of transatlantic relations with Alexandr Vondra, deputy prime minister of the Czech Republic and former foreign minister and Czech ambassador to the United States, organized by the CSIS New European Democracies Project.

November 16–18—Annual U.S.-France Bilateral Dialogue on U.S.-French and transatlantic relations, attended by high-level French and U.S. policymakers and experts, in Washington, D.C., and Annapolis, Md., hosted by the CSIS Europe Program.

After Elections, Poland Is Likely to Be Friendlier to Berlin

Patrycja Podrazik

Relations between Germany and Poland seem virtually certain to improve following the victory of the center-right Civic Platform (PO) in parliamentary elections on October 21, although some tensions will undoubtedly persist. The PO leader, Donald Tusk, who is to head the new government, does not share the predilection of outgoing prime minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski for confrontation with the European Union in general and Germany in particular—an aggressive approach that has helped cause Polish-German relations to sink to one of the lowest points in many years.

European Parliament president Hans-Gert Poettering, a German Christian Democrat, expressed a widespread view among Poland's EU partners, saying the Civic Platform's victory was "a good signal for Europe. And things will surely get a bit easier between Germany and Poland."

The defeated Law and Justice party (PiS), led by the twin Kaczynski brothers—with Lech the country's president—embodies an idiosyncratic mix of nationalism, historical grievance (toward not only Germany but also Russia), and self-identification by the twins with the state. Critics have called them provincial, unprofessional, and "stuck in the past."

The mutually cooperative Polish-German relationship of the 1990s had started to deteriorate before the twins rose to power in the last two years. Some German policies under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder—particularly the Baltic gas pipeline deal with Russia, which bypassed Poland—touched Poland's most sensitive nerve, its sense of historical injustice. A dispute over compensation for Germans expelled from Polish properties after World War II has contributed to a souring of the mood on both sides for more than 10 years.

Relations deteriorated sharply, however, with the twins' arrival at the head of government, which coincided with an increasing assertiveness by Germany on the global stage. The brothers openly denounced Berlin's "desire to dominate Europe" and sought to strengthen Poland's position in the European Union by working not with Germany but against it.

Mainstream Polish media and public opinion were dismayed by Jaroslaw Kaczynski's performance at an EU summit meeting in June, during which he openly clashed with German chancellor Angela Merkel over Poland's voting power in the European Union. His stance appealed, on the other hand, to a small, but vocal and well-organized part of the electorate influenced by the xenophobic message of a controversial, ultra-Catholic radio station.

These voters, concentrated mainly in the impoverished east of Poland, are deeply ideological and exceptionally effective in "getting out the vote," whereas more moderate voters, disillusioned with the scandals and incompetence of many post-1989 governments, have tended to stay home on election day. The high turnout in the October poll, however, suggests that this may be changing.

While coalition talks have not yet been completed, Tusk's preferred partner is the centrist Polish Peasants Party (PSL). Both the PO and the PSL have a record of cooperative relations with Germany. The future parliamentary opposition, aside from the PiS, will include the liberal Left and Democrats (LiD), which also wants a better relationship. So, Polish relations with Germany, and the EU at large, are almost guaranteed to improve.

Contrary to a widespread belief, stoked partly by certain sections of the German tabloid press, anti-German sentiments are a marginal phenomenon in Poland. In fact, a number of successful state-sponsored and independent organizations dedicated to fostering Polish-German dialogue have proliferated since the early 1990s. In the view of most Poles, historical baggage should not affect today's ties, since Germany is Poland's main trading partner and strongly supported Polish EU entry in 2004.

Some problems, such as the pipeline, will not go away, and Lech Kaczynski will remain president until at least 2010, with considerable constitutional authority in foreign policy. There are signs that he and Merkel want to improve the atmosphere. Ultimately, however, unless his conciliatory approach proves permanent, and until some German politicians and newspapers tone down their sarcastic references to Poland, relations will struggle to recover.

Patrycja Podrazik is a member of the CSIS Europe Program staff. ■

TALK OF NUCLEAR ATTACK INFLAMES COUNTERTERRORISM DEBATE

David Gordon

Two top Christian Democratic ministers have dramatically exacerbated Germany's debate over how far civil liberties should be restricted to fight terrorism, causing a new rift in the governing Christian Democrat/Social Democrat grand coalition. Outspoken Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble started the uproar in mid-September by telling a newspaper that many experts were convinced it was a question of "when, not if" terrorists would attack with nuclear weapons.

In a magazine interview the next day, Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung said he would order a hijacked airliner shot down if there were no other way "to protect our people" in a 9/11-style attack—an action barred in 2006 by Germany's highest court.

The comments further polarized Germany's political landscape, with one side, led by Schäuble, arguing that Germany needs to develop stronger and more intrusive antiterror measures such as indefinite detention. The other side, mindful of past suppression of liberties under Nazism and Communism and fervently opposed to the way the United States has conducted its war on terror, maintains that the measures proposed by Schäuble and his allies are excessive.

The context has changed, however, following the foiled plot to bomb commuter trains in July 2006, the September 2007 arrest of three jihadists, and a rise in terror warnings. In a recent poll by the German Marshall Fund, 70 percent of Germans said they were likely to be affected by terrorism within the next decade—up from 38 percent in 2005. But the public still seems unsure of how to face the threat. In an end-September survey in the weekly *Der Spiegel*, 60 percent of respondents said Schäuble was "scaremongering." Conversely, also in September, a Politbarometer poll showed 65 percent support for an aggressive online search law that Schäuble favors.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's backing for Schäuble's tough stance also ebbs and flows. Seeking to calm bickering between the coalition partners, Merkel initially called on Schäuble to restrain himself after his comment about the likelihood of a nuclear attack. But when Kurt Beck, the Social Democrat leader, asked Merkel to keep Schäuble on a shorter leash, Merkel said that was impossible.

Nevertheless, while the German public continues to debate new domestic security measures, the government is taking incremental steps forward. By late September, it had passed 13 measures expanding the powers of the German security services to combat terrorism. Many argue that this has been Schäuble's strategy from day one—to campaign for the extreme but accomplish the mundane. Regardless of Schäuble's intentions, however, Germany seems to be making modest-paced and deliberate reforms.

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News Updates

- President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, on his first official visit to Washington, received a warm welcome during an address to a joint session of Congress, in which he stressed the renewed strength and importance of France's alliance with the United States but also urged that Washington do more to combat climate change. Sarkozy discussed the Middle East and other issues with President Bush and strongly supported Bush's drive for tougher economic sanctions against Iran.
- The European Commission proposed EU-wide antiterrorism measures that would make it illegal to recruit or train terrorists or provoke terrorism. The creation of Web sites encouraging violence or explaining how to make bombs would become a criminal offense. Collection of 19 pieces of personal information about people flying to or from member states would bring the EU in line with the United States but would not apply to flights within the EU.
- Poland's new prime minister, Donald Tusk, stressed the importance of strong relations with the United States, but said he would seek to withdraw Polish troops from Iraq by the end of 2008 and reconsider the terms of Poland's agreement to host a U.S. missile defense base. Tusk said Poland would work to improve ties with fellow EU members, especially Germany, and would aim to adopt the euro by 2012–2013.
- Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the United States might delay activating its planned missile defense facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic until the threat from Iran's missile program became more immediate, apparently to calm fears in Moscow. President Bush urged Congress to approve full financing of the European antimissile sites, following moves on Capitol Hill to cut \$139 million from funds proposed for the project this year.
- EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn predicted that all west Balkan countries—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia—would next year complete stabilization and association agreements preparing the way for eventual EU entry. But he said Turkey should not begin critical accession talks on justice and human rights until it had amended a law used to prosecute journalists and intellectuals for "insulting Turkishness."
- Only 25 percent of Irish voters told a survey they would approve the new EU Reform Treaty, agreed to by EU leaders in Lisbon in October. Thirteen percent said they would vote "no," and 62 percent were undecided. Ireland is the only country certain to hold a referendum on the treaty, a modified version of the EU constitution, and a "no" vote would cause serious legal and political problems. In Britain, shadow foreign secretary William Hague conceded that Parliament was unlikely to approve Conservative calls for a referendum.

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